



Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa

Regional Country Profiles

The Study Team are responsible for the choice and presentation of the data and facts contained in this document and for the opinions expressed therein, these are not necessarily those of SARUA nor the AAU and do not make any commitment for either association.

The country study presented here was prepared as a part of the study “Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa” (SARUA, 2009). It forms the background data to that study and is published here as an appendix to that report. The Country Studies data has not been subjected to the same level of editorial scrutiny as the Report itself. However, we publish these country studies as supplemental information to that presented in the Report, and hope that they will be of value to other researchers in the region.

MAURITIUS

7.1 Country Context

TABLE: 1. World Development Indicators

World Development Indicators	Yr 2006
Population, total (millions)	1.3
Population growth (annual %)	0.8
Surface area (sq km) (thousands)	2
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	73.2
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	12.6
Literacy rate, youth female (% of females ages 15-24)	95.4
GNI (current US\$) (billions)	6.4
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	5430
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population ages 15-49)	0.6

Source: *World Bank Mauritius: Quick Facts*¹

Mauritius gained independence in 1968, post a history of colonisation first by the Dutch (1598), then the French (1710) and finally the British (1810). It opted to remain a member of the Commonwealth and this link with Britain has influenced the education system. The population of Mauritius is highly diverse, with Indo-Mauritians comprising the majority (68 percent). English is the official language of the state and therefore the language of instruction in schools. However in daily interactions it is used by less than 1 percent of the population. Creole is the preferred spoken word for 80,5 percent of the population. (Census 2000 in MoEHR, 2008).

Since independence Mauritius has moved from a low-income to an upper-middle income country. By diversifying the economy from a reliance on sugar to include textiles, banking, tourism and information technology, and supported by good governance Mauritius achieved the second highest GDP growth rate in Africa of 4,5 percent for 2006/2007. However, low investment and rising unemployment, coupled with the phasing out of sugar preferences, threatens the potential of GDP

¹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MAURITIUSEXTN/0,,menuPK:382000~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:381974,00.html> accessed 19 August 2008

growth to continue rising and current economic growth still remains below the 'miracle' years of the 1970s and 1980s, when sugar production was fuelling growth. Unemployment in Mauritius during the first quarter of 2008 was estimated at 8,2 percent; a drop compared to the pattern of a gradual increase in the rate of unemployment since 2000. (MoEHR, 2008a) The national education system has grown out of the original private enterprises and the Cambridge School and High School Certifications form the basis of general education qualifications.² Today Mauritius is a multi-party parliamentary democracy.

7.2 Planning Context

Vision 2020: In the mid-1990s Mauritius conducted a study on its long-term perspective (25 years), called Vision 2020. In this study the government equated the priorities of social justice and economic efficiency; setting a goal of sustaining growth within the range of 5,5 percent to 7,5 percent.

Mauritius is striving to broaden its economy further by supporting emerging sectors including a seafood hub, real estate, pharmaceuticals, alternative energy and logistics. (HRDC 2007) Improvements to the education system, supported by greater efficiency in public investment, will enable the Republic to achieve the desired economic growth rate. Aspiring to the standards of human capital development and standards in Japan, Singapore and Korea, the education sector needs to continue to expand; stronger relationships with the business sector will support education relevance and nurture an entrepreneurial and innovative culture. To compensate for limited research and development (R&D) capacity Mauritius is looking to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) in order to access cutting-edge technology and marketing skills. (HRDC 2007)

National Strategic Plan for Education and Training (NSPET) 2008-2020

Overall Goal: To make Mauritius a Knowledge Hub to serve the Region

Overall Strategy: Create an enabling environment for Mauritius to emerge as a Regional Knowledge Hub and a Centre for Higher Learning and Excellence

Education and Human Resources Strategic Plan (EHRSP) 2008 – 2020

² Refer to page that looks at structure of education system

The Government's commitment to education is reflected in its future strategies and plans. In the draft of its Education and Human Resources Strategic Plan (EHRSP) 2008 – 2020 the Ministry of Education and Human Resources (MoEHR) states its vision is to establish: 'A world class quality education for all and a human resource development base to transform Mauritius into an intelligent nation state in the vanguard of global progress and innovation.' In striving for this vision the MoEHR has stated the following mission:

- 'To develop a culture of achievement and excellence by promoting an efficient and effective education and training system that is inclusive and integrated, comprehensive and holistic
- To ensure learning opportunities are accessible to all to meet the personal needs of the individual
- To foster innovation and to generate new knowledge for the socio-economic and sustainable development of the nation.' (MoEHR, 2008a)

7.3 Education Context

By 1982, when primary education became compulsory, Mauritius enrolment at primary level was nearly universal. In 1977 Mauritius declared free secondary education compulsory and in 2005 the Education Act was amended to make education compulsory for all up to the age of 16 years. (MoEHR 2008a).

Government has gained the support of the private sector to enhance the education system. The private sector's response to the call for secondary education was to establish the Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA). This provided facilities and maintained standards at non-state secondary schools, while the state provided large grants to cover the recurrent costs. The long-term impact of this public-private partnership is that the proportion of learners attending private schools has increased steadily since the late 1990s and as detailed in Table: 2. there is predominance in numbers of private institutions

Restructuring of the education sector within the last 10 years has tried to address matters of accessibility; to make post primary education more inclusive and integrated. In 2002 the Ministry abolished the official ranking system of learners for admission to highly rated secondary schools, known as 'star schools'. In the following year the pre-vocational options for learners' post primary education were integrated into mainstream classes. These offer basic literacy, numeracy, science, technical and ICT skills training for learners who are not eligible for mainstream lower secondary education. To date the results have not had the desired impact. The previous 'star schools' have retained this status because of the level of students they admitted, while Pre-Vocational Education (PVE) has been negatively branded because it accommodates learners who failed CPE twice; but still

need to attend compulsory secondary education until the age of 16. Yet, both changes have tried to open up the opportunity for all students 'to embark on and complete higher secondary education for employability and higher and further education and training with the required maturity and confidence' as articulated in the objectives of the EHRSP 2008 – 2020 (MoEHR, 2008a).

'Today the Government recognises the pivotal role played by pre-primary education in building the foundations upon which all future learning ultimately depends' and in an effort to ensure equitable access to pre-primary education for all children the Government pays a monthly per capita grant of Rs200 to all children of four years plus. The EHRSP is proposing gradual professionalisation of the pre-primary sub-sector and would like to make it compulsory for all children aged three to five years. (MoEHR, 2008a and HRDP 2007)

TABLE: 2. Structure of General Education Mauritius

Level of Education	Grades	Number of Years	Age Range	National Examination/Certificate
Pre-Primary		3	3-5 yrs	
Primary	Standards I-IV	6	6-11 yrs	National Certificate of Primary Education
Lower Secondary	Forms I-V	5	12-16 yrs	Cambridge School Certificate (SC)
Upper Secondary	Form VI (Lower & Upper)	2	17-18 yrs	Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC)

In terms of formal examinations, the Cambridge School Certificate (SC), and the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) are regarded highly for their portability; enabling Mauritians to access universities abroad. There are however plans, articulated in the Draft EHRSP 2008 – 2020, to reform this system. This includes the introduction of the International Baccalaureate to replace the HSC in an effort to help learners enter the labour market post secondary education if and where higher education is not an option. (MoEHR, 2008a)

The education system is administered across five zones. Although the numbers of institutions vary from one zone to the next, the proportions of pre-primary to primary and primary to secondary

remain similar. There are roughly a third of the number of primary schools to pre-primary schools and just under 50 percent more primary schools than secondary schools.

TABLE: 3. Situational Analysis of Pre-Primary to Secondary Education in the Republic of Mauritius ³ (2007)

Information Type	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary			Pre-Vocational (separated)
			Academic	Pre-Voc	Academic & Pre-Voc	
Number of Institutions	1,076	289	40	7	146	153
Public	179 (17%)	219	70 (37.6%)			66 (43%)
Private	826 (77%)	17	96 (51.6%)			87 (57%)
Other	71 (6%) ⁴	53 ⁵	20 (10.8) ⁶			
Enrolment	36,467	119,310 ⁷	116,706			9,573
Boys	18,362 (50.3%)	60,848 (51%)	56,097 (48%)			5,957
Girls	18,105 (49.7%)	58,462 (49%)	60,609 (52%)			3,616
Public		74%				36%

³ Includes data from Rodrigues

⁴ Consists of pre-primary schools operating on government premises and administered by either Roman Catholic authorities or Municipal/Village Councils

⁵ Includes 51 schools run by the Roman Catholic Education Authority (RCEA) and 2 by the Hindu Education Authority

⁶ Includes Mauritius Educational Development Company (MEDCO)/Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO)

⁷ Demographic factors has led to a decline in total enrolment in primary schools (in 2000 total enrolment stood at 135,237)

Private (aided & non-aided)		26%			64%
GER	94%	101%	69%	74% ⁸	
Learner / Teacher Ratio	15:1	28:1	16:1		14:1
Certificate Pass Rates		65%	78.9% (SC) 79.3% (HSC)		

Source: *MoEHR 2008a and MoFED 2008*

The strategic and financial commitments of Mauritius have manifested in high enrolment figures. While the numbers of learners enrolling in primary education have been declining since 2000 (fertility has declined to just under two children per woman⁹), GER for primary level education is estimated at more than 100 percent and over 50 percent at secondary level. The education system is showing good parity between male and female learners. Across all levels of education there is only a 1 percent difference in numbers across gender. (MoFED 2008)

Rates of completion at primary and secondary level are a fundamental component of tertiary education in Mauritius and its strategic intentions for the future. The transition rate from Standard VI to all secondary education (mainstream and pre-vocational), has risen significantly, from 73,3 percent in 2001 to 83,6 percent in 2007. However the MoEHR has set the goal of doubling the enrolment ratio at tertiary level by 2015 and the current transition rates from primary education to higher education reveal a sharp pyramidal structure, limiting the potential for Mauritius to reach this goal. The Mauritian Government believes that not enough students are coming through the education system. In 2007 22,8 percent of Standard VI learners had to repeat the year; an improvement on 28,7 percent in 2004 and 2005, but still significant and the pattern is fairly consistent across public and private institutions.

Contrary to most countries in this study, repetition affects private secondary schools more (16,1 percent in 2007 in comparison to 5,4 percent at government schools) because the government schools attract the better achieving learners. Pass rates for girls tend to be higher than boys across the board. On a wider scale, of the number of learners who accessed primary schooling in 1994, only 36 percent accessed secondary schooling and 28 percent completed this level of schooling in 2006. This analysis included those who repeated a year and of those 28 percent some learners were unable to access tertiary education for reasons including ineligibility, limited access or lack of funds. Assessments on performance at CPE level have indicated that – with the academically inclined curriculum, – a significant number of learners either do really well or do really badly and a relatively lower number of learners achieve an intermediate grade. (MoEHR, 2008a)

⁸ Combined with academic stream

⁹ <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>

Nonetheless there are signs of the demand for higher education steadily increasing as pass rates for all three levels of national certification have been gradually improving. At School Certificate level the pass rate rose from 74,6 percent in 2002 to 78,9 percent in 2006. Similarly at the High School Certificate level the pass rate rose from 75,8 percent in 2002 to 79.3 percent in 2006. There are proposed plans for addressing the access issues such as the Second Chance Programme, outlined in the 2008 – 2009 Budget, where learners who have dropped out of school and are not in full employment will be orientated into a vocational programme. (MoEHR, 2008a and 2008b)

7.3.1 Focus on Higher Education

7.3.1.1. Policy Environment

2005 Government Reform Programme: ‘Increase access to tertiary education.’

In the **2008/09 Budget Speech of the Government of Mauritius** it was announced that GoM plans to scale up enrolment and ‘enable all students who qualify and are willing to study access to tertiary institutions.’ (GoM 2008. Budget Speech)

National Strategic Plan for Education and Training (NSPET) 2008-2020

Overall Goal: To make Mauritius a Knowledge Hub to serve the Region

Overall Strategy: Create an enabling environment for Mauritius to emerge as a Regional Knowledge Hub and a Centre for Higher Learning and Excellence

Objectives

1. Increasing access and enhancing quality and relevance

e.g. Component 1.1: Increasing the GTER from the present 34 percent to 45 percent in 2015 and 50 percent in 2020. Target 1.1.1: 2008 – 35.5 percent: 2009 – 37 percent: 2020 – 50 percent.

2. Ensuring financial sustainability

e.g. Component 2.4: Establishment of a national student loan scheme. Target 2.4.1: The loan scheme to be operational by 2010

3. Strengthening sector capability and optimal use of resources e.g. Target 3.3.1:

Earmarking 2 percent of the budget for staff development

4. Meeting students' needs

5. Promoting science and technology (including information technology) education

6: Research for national development

e.g. Component 6.3: Encourage consultancies and commercial spin-offs from research.

7: New direction for state funded scholarships

e.g. Component 7.1: Reviewing state-funded scholarship to focus more on postgraduate scholarships. Target 7.1.1: Increase in number of state-funded postgraduate scholarships

e.g. Component 7.2: Undergraduate state scholarships to be limited to local institutions where fields are available

8: Lifelong learning

9: New structural set ups

10: Linkages between tertiary education institutions and the economic sectors

e.g Component 10.1: Setting up of faculty and industry advisory boards. Target 10.1.1: All programmes to be designed with the assistance of Industry/SMEs by 2010.

Component 10.2: Compulsory work placement for full-time students. Target 10.2.1 : All F/T students to undergo work placement by 2010

Component 10.3: Fostering community outreach programmes. Target 10.3.1 : Each faculty in each TEI to establish at least two community outreach programmes during the year by 2010

Component 10.4: Using corporate social responsibility for promoting tertiary education. Target 10.4.1: Encourage participation of private sector in tertiary education through their CSR (two to three initiatives per year by 2010). (GOM NSPET 2008-2020)

The above strategies have been summarised, and only show the relevant examples of the targets. The level of specificity of the Mauritian Strategic Plan for Education and Training indicates a well-conceived plan. The plan has two strong components. Firstly, it shows a detailed logical interpretation of the country's development strategy. The economy of Mauritius has shifted from high resource growth (sugar and fish) to a service and knowledge economy. This was precipitated by

changes in preferential trade agreements which it previously enjoyed with Europe. At the same time, the sugar, tourist and tuna industries have allowed the small island state to reach higher-middle income status, preparing for the emergence of a service-led, knowledge economy.

The second strength of the education strategic plan is encapsulated in the targets set for each component. With a few exceptions, these targets are SMART-specific, measurable, appropriate and (apparently) realistic and time-bound. Although other countries in this study may have specific targets in their operational plans (which were not reviewed as part of this study) on the whole, their strategic plans for education tend to be more broad and generic.

The Master Plan on Education that the ministry produced in 1991 was considered by the donor community at that time as a good framework for other developing countries to adopt. As advocated at the Jomtein Education for All world conference in 1990, the plan went beyond facts and figures and included realistic goals and objectives, with well-planned strategies to meet these goals and objectives. (MoEHR 2008)

In terms of content, there are a number of features which are indicative of the level development in Mauritius. Plans to export their education system shows their expansionary approach to the region. Although many universities in this study cater for students from the region, this tends to be more demand than supply-driven. The second observation is that the plan intends increasing public funding to students at a time when most countries in this study are looking at scaling back state funding of universities. The strategic plan for education includes targets for wi-fi accessibility, compulsory work placements for students and community and outreach programmes. These are indicators of a university sector with sufficient resources to be able to do more than just cope with demand but focus on the quality of supply.

7.3.1.2 Profile of Higher Education

From the 1800s the colonial rulers of the island fought bitterly to oppose Mauritius setting up a university. It took over 100 years of debate in the Mauritius parliament to finally, in 1965, pass legislation paving the way for the establishment of a university. Prior to this Mauritians were dependent on travelling abroad to study or studying agriculture, the only post-school subject deemed suitable for the local inhabitants.

2 public universities, namely the University of Mauritius (UoM) and the University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM)

1 teacher-training college, the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE)

Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI), which specialises in Indian culture and languages

Mauritius College of the Air (MCA), which focuses on audio-visual and distance modes, for promoting education

Rabindranath Tagore Institute – a cultural vocation

Open University and a Language Institute of Mauritius are currently in the process of being set up. (All public HEIs with the exception of UTM do not charge student fees)

Private: 43 private institutions and over 50 overseas. (Fees are unregulated in them.)

3 Regional institutions: Institut Francophone de l'Entrepreneuriat, SSR Medical College and Mauras Dental College

The number of students enrolled in tertiary education increased from 7 600 in 1999 to 17 000 in 2005. Over the same period the GER increased from 7 percent to 17 percent.

TABLE: 4. Percentage Distribution by Field of Study in 1995

Faculty	%
Education	21
Humanities and Art	13
Social Science, Business and Law	30
Science	8
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	18
Agriculture	2
Health and Welfare	0.3
Services	1
Unknown	8.3

Source: EFA GMR, 2008

Government of Mauritius Plans to Increase Tertiary Enrolment

In the 2008/09 Budget Speech the GoM recognise that only 26 percent of learners enrolling in primary school will make it to tertiary education and that this translates into a Gross Enrolment Rate at tertiary level of only 36 percent. Comparing themselves to developed countries (USA 83 percent; UK 60 percent) (GMR. 2007), they recognise the need for strategies to scale up enrolment and, fortunately, due to their stable economy and developed infrastructure, as well as the government's stubborn commitment to their vision of building a service and knowledge economy, the GoM short-term plans are:

- ☐ Ensure a guaranteed loan scheme with easy repayment options to all families unable to afford higher education costs
- ☐ Expand facilities at existing HEIs
- ☐ To extend classroom hours and allow for flexi-learning programmes and study-while-you work options
- ☐ To set up a 'second chance' programme for secondary school leavers who do not qualify for tertiary education (with a focus on numeracy; language and life skills)
- ☐ Purchase laptops and provide free Internet access to all students using distance education programmes

7.3.1.3 Higher education structure and governance

Legislation: Education and Training Act (2005) and Tertiary Education Commission Act (1988). Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has responsibility for allocating public funds, and fostering, planning and co-ordinating the development of post-secondary education and training. The TEC has also the mandate to ensure the quality of post-secondary education in Mauritius.

7.4 Financing Context

Mauritius is in the process of implementing a programme-based budgeting system, making it difficult to track historical expenditure. The figures used for this analysis were taken from the latest programme-based budget estimates.

7.4.1 Trends in allocation

TABLE: 5. National Budget Allocations

Rupees Millions	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Allocation	Actual	Estimate	Estimate
Total Expenditure	47,414	55,087	63,505
Total Education	6,860	7,390	8,020
% of budget	14.47%	13.42%	12.63%
% of GDP	3.32%	3.14%	3.02%
Total Health	4,186	4,453	4,910
% of budget	8.83%	8.08%	7.73%
% of GDP	2.03%	1.89%	1.85%
Social Security	7,167	8,079	9,020
% of budget	15.12%	14.67%	14.20%
% of GDP	3.47%	3.43%	3.39%
GDP	206,328	235,532	265,706

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development PBB Estimates 2008, and Central Bank of Mauritius

Although expenditure on education is increasing in nominal terms from Rs 6,860-million to Rs 8,020-million in the period 2006/07 to 2008/09, it is actually decreasing as a percentage of the budget and of GDP. The proportion of spending on education declined from 14,47 percent of the budget in 2006/07 to 12,63 percent of the budget in 2008/09. Over the same period the proportion of spending on health and social security also declined from 8,83 percent to 7,73 percent of the budget and 15,12 percent to 14,2 percent of the budget respectively.

TABLE: 6. Education Budget Allocations

Rupees	2007/08	2008/09
Allocation	Estimate	Estimate
Total Expenditure	7,390,000,000	8,020,300,000
Education and HR Policy and management	277,383,345	298,921,359

	% Total	3.75%	3.73%
	Pre-Primary Education	104,000,000	125,102,000
	% Total	1.41%	1.56%
	Primary Education	2,100,068,725	2,182,146,095
	% Total	28.42%	27.21%
	Secondary Education	3,797,375,904	4,114,778,581
	% Total	51.39%	51.30%
	Technical and vocational	315,154,000	370,832,040
	% Total	4.26%	4.62%
	Tertiary Education	545,448,000	642,717,275
	% Total	7.38%	8.01%
	Special Education Needs	250,570,026	285,802,650
	% Total	3.39%	3.56%

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development PBB Estimates 2008

Spending in the Education budget is dominated by the Secondary Education programme which receives, on average, 51,24 percent of total expenditure. Allocations to Tertiary Education increase by 17,8 percent from 2007/08 to 2008/09, receiving on average 7,7 percent of the total Education budget. This appears to conform to the strategic objective of Mauritius becoming a more globally competitive work force.

7.4.2 Activity Support

TABLE: 7. Breakdown of Tertiary Education Budget

Rupees	2007/08	2008/09
Allocation	Estimate	Estimate
Tertiary Education Total	545,448,000	642,717,275
Compensation of employees	2,611,000	3,308,275
% total	0.48%	0.51%
Goods and services	1,277,000	1,409,000
% total	0.23%	0.22%

Grants	397,500,000	486,000,000	The Tertiary Education budget is dominated by grants to the tertiary
% total	72.88%	75.62%	
Scholarships	144,060,000	152,000,000	
% total	26.41%	23.65%	
Of which:			
Scholarships to foreign students	660,000	700,000	
Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Scholarships	17,700,000	18,600,000	
State of Mauritius Postgraduate Scholarships	12,700,000	14,000,000	
State of Mauritius Scholarships	113,000,000	118,700,000	

education sector which amount to, on average, 74,3 percent of the total. Of the remaining amount, a significant proportion is allocated to scholarships which account for, on average, 25 percent of the total. Grants increased by 22,3 percent from 2007/08 to 2008/09 while over the same period scholarships increased by only 5,5 percent.

7.5 Donor Context

Donor assistance to Mauritius has narrowed and declined as its economy has evolved and started to access capital markets. However, more recently Mauritius has seen an increase in donor involvement, sparked by the Government's request from the European Union (EU) to support changes in the sugar sector. The main external partners, including the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the EU, the Agence Française de Développement (AFDB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have co-ordinated their support through a Development Policy Loan. Early in 2008 the World Bank Group opened an office in Mauritius to underscore its commitment to its partnership with the country and to enhance efficient and effective engagement. While most African countries rely on the WB's soft-lending arm, Mauritius is eligible for IBRD loans because of its relatively high income. Besides advisory and analytical support in investment, procurement, expenditure and budgetary reviews and frameworks, the only WB project running at present is through a second Development Policy Loan to strengthen the transition from trade to open competition on the global market.¹⁰

7.6 Issues and Observations

¹⁰<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MAURITIUSEXTN/0,,menuPK:381984~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:381974,00.html> accessed 19 August 2008

Mauritius is a second world country, economically and developmentally comparable with Botswana and South Africa, although it does not have the large burden of poverty experienced by the latter. Mauritius has modelled much of its higher education system on Singapore, with a high level of state involvement and funding as well as a rapidly growing private provision. The stable economy of Mauritius, and the small population (half the population of Lesotho) allow for resources to be invested in higher education at a level not seen in most countries in this study. The first and largest area of comparison is that study at the University of Mauritius is free. Over and above this the government provides free transport to students as well as soft loans. It may be argued that in many countries in this study, governments de facto provide free university education through their bursary and loan schemes. This study did not investigate conditions and enforcement of repayment. The difference in Mauritius is that a university education is explicitly free and that the GoM is increasing its funding and expanding higher education at a rapid rate, comparable to Singapore in the 1990s.

Although Mauritius has many economic fundamentals in place, its economy is not enjoying the resource-driven growth that most countries in this study have enjoyed for the last five to ten years. In 2005 growth was only at 2,2 percent after major shocks to its economy, but by 2007/08, it is predicted to rise back to 5,5 percent. Similar to other countries in this study, Mauritius is faced with a major loss of skilled graduates to the first world and attempts to entice them to stay or return to the island has only met with partial success. Facilities at public HEIs are modern and well-resourced (wi-fi access). As the general standard of living in Mauritius rises, the public universities are in competition with private providers as well as overseas HEIs. This exerts pressure on them to attract the country's top students and maintain a relevant and high quality university system.